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Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 9
SUB-COMMISSION ON THE PROMOTION
AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-third session
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT TERRITORIES; REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

GE.01-11976 (E)

Letter dated 9 March 2001 from the Deputy Secretary-General of Amnesty International addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*

In your letter of 26 February 2001, you transmitted to us the comments of the Government of Togo concerning the report of the Organization of African Unity/United Nations International Commission of Inquiry for Togo.

Since then, intimidation of witnesses has continued, as indicated in our report (attached)**. Since the beginning of 2001, Amnesty International has identified at least 10 cases where persons living in Togo, Ghana and Benin have been harassed by the Togolese security forces or by persons close to the Government of Togo, some for having approached the International Commission of Inquiry. All have had to flee the place where they had been living.

Moreover, it now appears that the letter of the handwriting expert, attached to the comments of the Government of Togo, is a forgery, as are the two letters attributed to Mr. Gilchrist Olympio. The expert, Ms. Beverley East, was contacted by the lawyers hired by Amnesty International, and replied to us as follows:

"... this letter is not mine.

(1) It is not addressed to the person with [to] whom I originally addressed it to.

(2) It is not signed by me.

(3) It is not on my letterhead."

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* On 9 March 2001, the High Commissioner for Human Rights received a letter from the Deputy Secretary-General of Amnesty International concerning the report of the International Commission of Inquiry for Togo. The letter was transmitted to the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The letter is being made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session.

The United Nations has reproduced the comments of both the Government of Togo (E/CN.4/2001/134/Add.1) and Amnesty International (E/CN.4/2001/134/Add.2) as received. By doing so, the United Nations takes no position on the veracity or otherwise of any of the allegations made therein.

** The report referred to is entitled "Togo: The time for accountability has finally arrived". AI Index AFR 57/006/2001, 28 February 2001. The report is available on the Amnesty International Web site (www.amnesty.org).

In view of the libellous implications for our Secretary-General of the letters attributed to Mr. Olympio, who stated that they were forgeries, it appears to us to be indispensable for this latest information to be given the same circulation as the report and its addenda. We ask you in particular to make it available to the Commission on Human Rights and to publish it on your Internet Web site: in our view the High Commissioner cannot knowingly continue to circulate documents which Mr. Olympio and Ms. East have stated to be forgeries, without simultaneously informing the members of the Commission and the public of the latest information received concerning their lack of authenticity.

(Signed): Vincent del Buono
Deputy Secretary-General